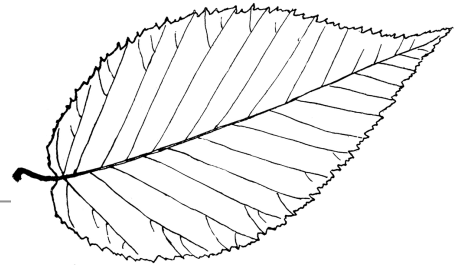


LEAF



Living on the Edge of Arden Forests

Welcome to our 8th issue of LEAF. We created our first issue back in September of 2018 as a way to communicate with neighbors that surround Arden's forests and who didn't have access to information that we circulate within the Ardens. We invited people to join **Forests of the Ardens** Facebook page so we could communicate regularly about important issues about our shared natural borders. And we have been successful! We have upped our page membership from roughly 140 members to over 400! But we would love more. If you live in the surrounding communities, please ask to join our page. LEAF newsletter is (mostly) an electronic newsletter, so it is important that we can keep everyone updated when new issues are available—and to keep the dialog going between issues.

Now that we have eight issues under our belt, we also have begun to build an archive. Much of the information in past issue is still relevant. Two of our past issues are Fall releases. Please revisit these issues for even more seasonal tips. We don't like to repeat ourselves, but we can all benefit from reminders. All issues of LEAF are available in the files section of the Forest of the Ardens Facebook Page, but you may have to dig a little. To see the archive all grouped together, go to the Arden Forest Committee page on the Arden Village Website. The page is a powerhouse of information—from Forest Committee Meeting notes, lists of invasive plants, forest use permits, forest stewardship policy and more. Follow the QR codes and go exploring. Then bookmark the sites and visit often. We are always updating with useful information. The sites are also a great way to contact the Arden Forest Committee if you have questions or suggestions for future LEAF articles. A notebook containing physical copies of back issues of LEAF is available to peruse at The Arden Library. —*Jill Althouse-Wood, editor*

Forests of the Ardens FB



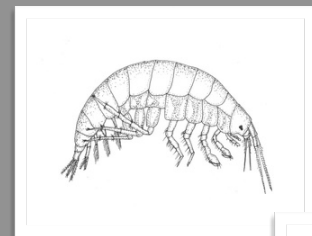
Arden Forest Committee



SOME GOOD NEWS!

David Jones (Arden Forest Committee) recently ran a test of Perkins Run and found zero phosphates. Perkins Run was where we noticed the filamentous green algae bloom earlier in the year. The algae is gone and there is only a marginally elevated nitrate level (within generally accepted levels not detrimental to aquatic life) Lawn fertilization is one way that these chemicals get into our waterway. **See page 2 of LEAF for lawn care tips.*

In addition, David noticed some forms of aquatic life in Perkins Run that he hasn't seen before: gammarus shrimp and willow moss. Stream diversity is a way to measure the health of an ecosystem.



Lawn Care Tips for Fall

Reducing lawn area and increasing native garden beds benefits wildlife, but for the lawn you keep, the organic lawn care methods outlined here will keep your lawn healthy without damaging our woods and streams. Excess chemicals and synthetic fertilizers can be damaging, and unnecessary. Save money on the chemicals with organic lawn practices.

Fertilize

- Although fertilization of lawns in autumn is generally recommended, test your soil first! You might not need fertilizer at all! (<https://www.udel.edu/canr/cooperative-extension/environmental-stewardship/soil-testing/>). The results of your soil test will come with recommendation for amendment.
- If your soil needs amendment, fertilize while the roots are still growing to help sustain your lawn over the winter. Many fertilizers recommended by commercial companies contain too much nitrogen or phosphorus. Excess nitrogen may damage the root structure of grass and cause an increase in nitrates in groundwater. Excess phosphorous in soil reduces the plant's ability to take up required micronutrients. Phosphorous can also leach into ground water and go into our streams where it promotes harmful algal growth (https://www.usgs.gov/special-topic/water-science-school/science/phosphorus-and-water?qt-science_center_objects=0#qt-science_center_objects).
- The most ecofriendly way to add nutrients is to use a mulching mower to feed grass clippings and chopped leaves back into the lawn adding organic material. This may be all the fertilizer you need! A lime application in the Fall can make your soil more alkaline. An alkaline pH favors grass over weeds.

Aerate

Aerate to allow nutrients and water to reach the roots. This is particularly important in heavy clay soil.

Seed

Before threat of frost, overseed problem areas in your lawn to outcompete weeds in the spring. Time seeding for right before you expect rain.

Dealing with Leaves

If you choose not to mulch your leaves, another eco-friendly way deal with them is by composting. Above all, do not dump your leaves in the woods. Leaf waste can change the pH of the forest floor, and the decomposition can negatively affect trees when piled too high. Dumping in the woods can result in invasive weed seeds disrupting our native ground.



Other tips

- Apply compost: only when necessary (see soil test above)! Mushroom soil can work.
- Apply corn gluten in spring before crabgrass and annual weed seeds germinate. Coat weed seeds with this benign amendment.

-Carol Larson and Bev Clendening

Fall's Most UN-Wanted

Do your part to eradicate garden gangsters now...before they infiltrate our forests. But leave the natives! A few invasive plants to pull in the fall include **Japanese Stilt Grass**, **Japanese Virgin's Bower**, and **Mugwort**. All of these can form monocultures, making exponential number of seeds and out-competing native plants that benefit wildlife.

Japanese Stiltgrass has a white line down the center, and "stilts" on the ground at right angles. Don't confuse it with a few native grasses that are great for wildlife and can help to out-compete stiltgrass. These include Whitegrass, which has a longer and more slender blade with no white line down the center. (See pp. 30-31 of *Mistaken Identity**) for a good comparison. Less known too is Nimblewill, which has even more slender blades and a darker color. See <https://www.humanegardener.com/the-best-native-grass-youve-never-heard-of/> for some great photos contrasting the two. Japanese Stiltgrass gets thick stalks this time of year that can produce up to 1,000 seeds each – and last for 3 years in the soil! Try to pull all seeds of this. Extra credit: Grab a partner and tackle one of the spots where Japanese Stiltgrass has infested our woods.

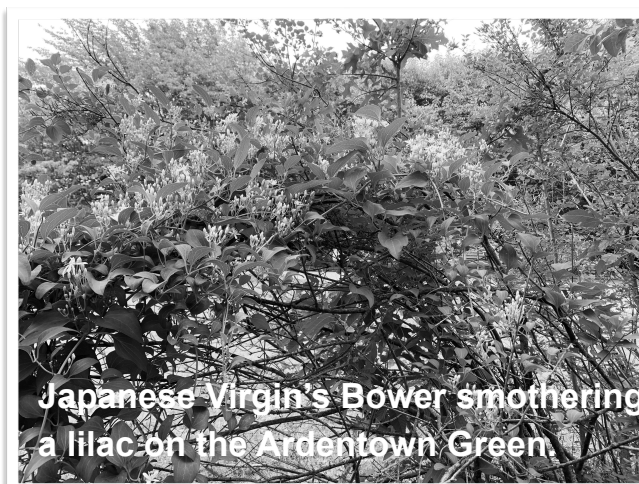
Japanese Virgin's Bower is also prevalent in the fall. It has lovely sweet-smelling flowers which are easily confused with a Sweet Autumn Clematis, a native vine, (also very aggressive!) which has serrated leaf edges and is not common in our area. If you love the smell please consider changing out the invasive for the native variety. (See *Mistaken identity* pp. 26-27*) to compare the two (and this author knows someone with the native always willing to give away shoots of this aggressive vine!)

Mugwort is another plant that is prevalent in our area especially along roadsides. At first it is easily mistaken for chrysanthemum – but the flowers look nothing like it and make many seeds which can also persist for years. Although some herbalists like this Artemisia plant, it can easily take over large areas like along Harvey Rd. and the railroad tracks. It is difficult to control but one that we should at least cut and dispose of the seeds (and try to dig up the very extensive rhizomatous roots). See <https://nystateparks.blog/2018/07/12/invasive-species-spotlight-mugwort/>

Thank you for helping our wildlife by reducing invasive plants in our natural areas!

—Elaine Schmerling

***Mistaken Identity** is a great resource for photos of these and a few other invasives: https://www.nybg.org/files/scientists/rnaczi/Mistaken_Identity_Final.pdf



Japanese Virgin's Bower smothering a lilac on the Ardentown Green.

* The Arden Forest committee has begun mapping the invasive plant species in a section of the Arden Woods. Teams of volunteers from Arden are monitoring sections of the woods to document changes in the maps. We plan to organize special volunteer events for invasive removal.



The Arden Club's Gardeners Gild Fall News

The Gardeners Gild is having a Fall Tree Sale, offering several types of oak saplings. The order sheet will be available at the GG's Arden Fair Booth (in front of the Arden Gild Hall) on **September 4th** and online on the GG Facebook page or by emailing 787serendipity@gmail.com

Our next monthly meeting (3rd Monday of the month at 7:30PM at Arden Gild Hall) will take place on **September 20th**. Tina Sams, who wrote several books on herbs, and is the writer/publisher of the *Essential Herbal Magazine*, will lead us in a fun workshop, where we will learn how to create unique and beautiful eco-printed, botanical greeting cards, using the plant-materials we bring along. Tina will provide each participant with paper to create up to 6 cards. The participants are asked to pick some leaves and flowers of interesting/varied shapes - preferably right before they leave for the workshop. We can share the plants to print onto our greeting cards. All are welcome, but please RSVP to 787serendipity@gmail.com, so we could make sure to have enough paper for everyone.

Our meeting on **October 18th** will shift the focus from plants to the people tending to the plants. We can all agree that gardening is fun, physical, and so fulfilling for those of us who love digging in the dirt. Our endeavors reward us in so many ways but can also result in back, hip or knee pain and stiffness. Come hear an experienced team of rehabilitation therapists, Denny Kozak, Physical Therapist, and Daniel Hinds, Physical Therapy Assistant, as they discuss general techniques for preventing injury and keeping ourselves moving and enjoying throughout the seasons of planting, weeding, harvesting, and then cleaning up and composting in the fall. This will be a general (and fun!) discussion and demonstration of body mechanics, warm ups, stretches and strategies to handle the lifting, pulling and repetitive movements that are essential in pursuit of our passion. Mark you calendars, and join us!

LEAF is brought to you by the Arden Forest Committee (in cooperation with our sister villages of Ardentown and Ardencroft, and the Arden Club Gardeners Gild). The Arden Forest Committee implements the Forest Stewardship Policy, the main tenets being preservation of a natural ecosystem, including appropriate wildlife habitat, and enhancing residents' interaction with and enjoyment of this natural environment. Specifically, the Forest Committee oversees trail improvements to encourage residents to enjoy the woods. We use social media to dialog with neighbors about ways to appreciate, respect, and care for our forests. In addition, we monitor hazard trees, evaluate risk, and intervene if damage to structures or hikers would occur if the tree fell. The forest committee is charged with the tasks of monitoring forest borders to stop encroachment by leaseholders or neighbors. We also observe water flow in an effort to prevent stream bank erosion and are currently monitoring our waters to ensure stream health. Lastly, we facilitate removal of invasive species to encourage native growth and diversity of native species.



Group of volunteers from the Gardeners Gild Spotted Lanternfly Task Force, proudly displaying the Award for Excellence from the DE Association of Environmental Education for an "an outstanding partnership in the environmental field that serves as a model and inspiration to others." Front row L-R: Linda Toman, Elaine Schmerling, Hajni Halasz, Back row L-R: Susan Stith, Edmond Bischoff, Carol Larson, Lee Painter, Joe Painter

Arden Forest Committee

Buzz Ware Village Center/ 2119 The Highway/ Wilmington, DE 19810

<http://arden.delaware.gov/committees/forest-committee/>

forest@arden.delaware.gov

Facebook group: Forests of the Ardens

Current elected members: Carol Larson (chair), Jill Althouse-Wood, David Jones, Bev Clendening, Keri del Tufo

Current meeting time: 3rd Monday of the month, 5 PM at Buzz Ware Village Center, 2119 The Highway, Arden. Meetings are open to the public.

LEAF editor: Jill Althouse-Wood

The goals of this newsletter are forest stewardship, community, and communication—goals we want to advance through social media and online forums. Some issues of this newsletter will be only available in electronic form. Join Facebook Group **Forests of the Ardens** to stay connected, find out about future events, and read archives of LEAF.